

## ***Hungarian Folk Dance Music of Transylvania – István Pávai – 2020.***

Hungarian Heritage House & MMA Kiadó, 430 p.  
ISBN 978-615-5927-14-0

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*Among the territories of the Carpathian Basin inhabited by Hungarians, Transylvania proved to be the most suitable field for the interethnic research of the music related to choreographic folklore. Most professional musicians in the rural areas, who receive regular or intermittent payment in money or other forms of remuneration, are of Romani ethnicity. The existence of musical instruments in the accompaniment of dances is richly documented since the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. Hungarian ethnochoreology defines three types of musical accompaniments for the dances: rhythmic accompaniment (without melody), merely melodic accompaniment, and complex accompaniment created by the combination the first two types. A number of accompaniment types, considered ideal by local communities, had been established. These include the duos flute–gardon, fiddle–gardon (the gardon/gordună being a stringed percussion instrument), fiddle or flute with koboz/cobză, the trios made up of violin–cimbalom/țambal–bass, or fiddle–kontra–double bass, the most common band consisting of a fiddle, a three-stringed kontra with flat bridge, and a bass (without cimbalom/țambal). The rhythmic formulae provided by these instrumental ensembles specialized in accompaniment-playing constitute the musical support of the dances, at the same time they play an important role in defining the dance types. The three main types of rhythmic accompaniment are: slow dúvő/duva (in quarters), fast dúvő/duva (in eighths) and the estam (produced by eighth notes, alternately played by different instruments). The musical folklore of Transylvania inherited several principles of harmonization, such as the drone/ison principle, various forms of heterophony, polyphony focused on pivotal melodic notes, the accompaniment with mixtures of major triads, and the tonal-functional harmonization.*

### **1. Introduction**

When I began to read István Pávai's book, I thought I was familiar enough with the subject not to have to peruse the volume in detail. However, I soon realized that I

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was wrong: the wide-ranging presentation of the phenomenon and the multitude of new data and information forced me to meticulously study the book which at the same time proved to be an exciting reading material.

The volume comprises ten chapters, followed by the BIBLIOGRAPHY, listing an impressive amount of titles, and further two chapters (DIALECTAL DIVISION OF THE HUNGARIAN FOLK DANCE MUSIC OF TRANSYLVANIA and INDEX OF GEOGRAPHIC NAMES), both containing numerous data, relevant to the subject.

The author remembers his professors at the Cluj Music Academy who smoothed his path to become a folk music researcher (János Jagamas, Ileana Szenik, Traian Mârza, and Romeo Ghircoiaşiu) and enumerates the publications which led his attention to dance music (the writings of László Lajtha, Bálint Sárosi, and György Martin). It was during the initial period of the Transylvanian dance house movement, in the late 1970s, that – encouraged by Martin György – István Pávai began his research of Hungarian folk dance music.

The choice of topic was focused on a hardly explored field, especially with regard to the dance aspects connected to the music. The present volume is the result of nearly four decades of research and it is based on the author's previous book (*Az erdélyi és a moldvai magyarság népi tánczenéje* [The folk dance music of the Hungarians of Transylvania and Moldavia], 1993) as well as his PhD doctoral dissertation (*A tánczene és interetnikus kapcsolatai az erdélyi magyar néphagyományban* [Dance music and its interethnic relations in the Hungarian folk tradition of Transylvania], 2005).

István Pávai draws attention to important shortcomings in regard to the dance music collections so far:

- a) The survey of the melody repertoire was incomplete even within the much-studied regions.
- b) Due to the melody-centered collections, earlier research primarily approached dance music from vantage points other than that of the dance.
- c) The dance music material collected from different parts of Transylvania was unsatisfactory when compared to the richness and tradition of the area.
- d) A significant proportion of the audio and video recordings in professional archives and private collections, especially the instrumental music and consequently the dance music recordings, were not transcribed and processed. This is why the so-called functional recordings made during spontaneous dance events, or the musical recordings made during dance collections in the presence of active dancers became so important.
- e) The number of researchers studying vocal music and its theoretical implications was much higher than the number of researchers dealing with instrumental music.

- f) Within the research of instrumental music, the organological description of the instruments and the exploration of their historical connections were given the greatest emphasis, followed by the examination of the melody repertoire and the performance techniques, while much less research time was spent on observing and analyzing the multiple aspects of polyphony and harmony.

In the following, István Pávai reviews the relatively short history of the research on Hungarian folk dance music in Transylvania and highlights the relevant publications of Bálint Sárosi, Lujza Tari, and other researchers.

## 2. Contextualization of the topic

The author first of all clarifies the concept of folk dance music. The definition seems an easy task, at first glance, as folk dance music “designates any music used partly or wholly for dancing for several generations by communities with a traditional way of life.” (p. 25) As far as the so-called functional collections are concerned, this is obvious, but in the case of the recordings of vocal music or of a single melody instrument, the dancing character can be impaired in several ways, e.g. the informant may perform the melody at a different tempo, or may skip the rests at the end of the melodic lines, etc.

In addition, Pávai draws the attention to the interethnic nature of the research area: “The interaction of Hungarian folk music primarily with the folk music of the Romanians and the Roms, and to a lesser extent with the musical tradition of the Saxons and the Jews, is of basic importance in Transylvania.” (p. 38)

## 3. Technical issues of documentation

The author reviews the different forms of data processing and documentation. The manual registration of data usually does not document the music itself, but its conditions (instruments, apparatus, etc.). Literary and iconographic data may serve as sources for a research topic, while the written ethnographic records provide further important data. The on-the-spot transcriptions of music may already offer information about the melodies and the accompanying instruments, as well as the performance techniques, like Oszkár Dincser’s description of the instrumental music in Csík County, containing the notation of the set of stops and the fingering used in local kontra-playing (p. 47).

The subchapter on *Mechanical data recording* discusses the use of the different technologies and their importance for the research on our topic. These include photography, sound recording, and complex documentation with motion picture technology. The reader will find a detailed description of the sound recording devices,

in the chronological order of their appearance, from the phonograph to the latest digital technique. At the same time, István Pávai describes the advantages and disadvantages of the various procedures, which resulted from the technological development itself. He also quotes some testimonies and pieces of advice coming from experts in instrumental folk music research. A few collection projects related to the emergence of newer and newer devices (e.g. the “Patria” gramophone series, or the “Utolsó Óra/Final Hour” recording sessions) are also presented.

#### **4. Status, role, ethnicity**

From this chapter we learn that the dance occasions of a community are governed by the community’s own traditions, inherited from the predecessors. The status of a professional musician is filled by musicians who are regularly hired by the village community to provide a service. Musicians preserve tradition better than the community itself, but at the same time are the first to take over the newly appearing pieces, in order to keep pace with fashion. Among professional musicians, Pávai distinguishes between those who can read sheet music and the “naturists” (those who are musically illiterate), noting that there are differences in repertoire and style that tip the scales to the latter. At the same time, Pávai observes that, in Transylvania, the divide between urban and rural musicians is not as sharp as in the case of the Romani musicians in Budapest.

The relationship between dancer and musician can be beneficial or, conversely, detrimental to the music being played. Musicians enjoy making music for good dancers; on the other hand, they will play with less enthusiasm for a poor dancer. Between a good dancer and a good musician, there is constant visual communication. Most of the village folk musicians are also good dancers themselves. The dancers’ singing and shouting dance rhymes also influences the way the musician plays. When the dancers sing, the musician will, in turn, play in a more cantabile manner, with smooth ornamentation, and mostly omitting figurations. However, it is mandatory to go on with the melody as long as the dancers still sing it. Dance words usually only affect the tempo and possibly the rhythm of the music and dance.

As for the relationship between collector and musician, we learn that a musician may perform differently when playing in the presence of dancers or if only a collector is present. For Pávai, it has been extremely important to collect through the above-mentioned functional recordings, as well as to record conversations with the musicians and to double check the obtained information with the dancers. One of the positive effects of collectors and collections is that certain fiddlers try to preserve archaic melodies, or even re-learn them.

Dance music in Transylvania, similarly to the other parts of the Carpathian Basin, was mostly provided by Romani musicians. The word “*cigány/țigan*” [Rom] referred not only to an ethnicity, but also to the musical profession (regardless of the ethnicity). Among Romani musicians, we distinguish between Hungarian Roms, Romanian Roms and Saxon Roms. As Transylvania has been the site of centuries of coexistence between different ethnicities, it is not surprising that musicians played for all the ethnicities living in their region. This led to the blurring of ethnic characteristics in the dance music of certain regions. Joint dance events, e.g. mixed weddings, also facilitated interethnic musical connections. Pávai emphasizes that in many cases the dance and dance music of a Romanian community of a certain region might be closer to that of the Hungarians of the same region than to dance and dance music of the Romanians living in more distant regions. He also gives musical examples of the traditional interethnic dance cycle from Vajdaszentivány/Voivodeni with its Hungarian, Romanian, and Romani dances, all of which performed by the entire rural community (p. 111–114).

Striving to create a unified national culture, intellectuals often negatively influenced tradition by facilitating the replacement of old elements with new ones. The dance house movement has brought about a change in this area: its representatives sought to acquire profound knowledge about the various manifestations of tradition.

## **5. Instruments of dance music**

The extensive chapter contains subchapters dedicated to the individual instruments which deal with historical overview, geographical distribution, archival data, iconographical and textual references, mentionings in the literature, photographs, and in some places quotations from the recollections of the informants, as well as sheet music.

Among the idiophones we find the occasional rhythm instruments, commonly used for spontaneous and unplanned dance occasions, or in communities that for some reason could not afford to employ musicians. The Jew’s harp, used as makeshift dance accompaniment, had a much wider occurrence in the olden times, but the collections mainly originate only from Moldavia.

To carry on with the membranophones, the drum must have been quite spread in the area of the Hungarian language, as an instrument of shamanic rituals. In Transylvania, it was replaced by the chordophone *gardon*. In Moldavia, the simple side drum or hand drum was also in use in the dance accompaniment, while the bass drum with a cymbal fastened to the top had appeared recently. Bass drums were also used in Székely regions, in the local brass bands.

The most common instruments in Transylvania belong to the chordophones. Among the plucked instruments, the zither is mainly used in the Székely regions.

The cimbalom (Hungarian dulcimer) was part of Romani bands since the end of the 18th century, and then spread to rural Romani musicians in certain areas. The țambal, with a different tuning, earned popularity during the late 19th century in Wallachia. In the home regions of the forgatós ('turning') dances, i.e. the Mureș Region, the cimbalom is an essential component of the folk dance music. It is also quite frequent in Gheorgheni and Țara Bârsei, while it is less frequent in Southern Transylvania and the Transylvanian Plain where it was mainly used as a melodic instrument. In Bonțida and Satu Mare the chordal accompaniment was common.

The koboz was widely popular throughout Hungary until around 1700, hence probably in Transylvania where its use is documented in the Țara Bârsei. As a Romanian folk instrument (cobză), it can be found in Moldavia, Wallachia and some parts of Southern Transylvania. It was used for chordal and rhythmic accompaniment as well as a melodic instrument.

The hegedű (fiddle) is one of the most widespread dance accompaniment instruments in the entire Hungarian language area. Archival data exist already from the 15th and 16th centuries, first in the form of a surname (Hegedűs, i.e. Fiddler/Violonist), and then as an instrument. The so-called Hungarian fiddle was described in 1683 as oblong in shape, the body and the neck made of the same piece of wood, and the tuning pegs perpendicular to the top plate. However, the fiddle is not only a melody-playing instrument: it also has an important rhythmic and harmonic role in dance accompaniment when used as kontra, the "chords" being played in this case with double stops (two-stringed kontra). The same role can also be fulfilled by a viola. When the band includes two musicians on the two-stringed kontra, they will try to distribute the double stops, upon the influence of urban Romani musicians, so that they jointly produce triads. The three-stringed kontra, which has a bridge cut straight at the top, is far more frequent in Transylvania. Its tuning takes over that of the viola's three upper strings, except that the a1 string is transposed an octave lower, being replaced by a g string tuned to a. Thus, a great variety of harmonies may be produced. In archaic regions, such as the Transylvanian Plain, the use of major chords prevails. The three-stringed kontra was used in most Transylvanian regions with Hungarian inhabitants, except for the Székely region. A rare variant occurs in the Eastern part of the Transylvanian Plain: it is the four-stringed viola with the bridge cut flat.

The bass, a relatively young folk instrument, first appeared in manorial Romani bands. It was common in almost every region of Transylvania in the second half of the 20th century. It had two sizes: the small bass (kisbőgő), and the double bass (nagybőgő), while the middle-sized homemade replicas were all called bőgő

(bass). In Transylvania, the bass is used as a percussion instrument: it is beaten with the bow or a stick, or it is plucked. The latter manner of performance, the pizzicato is mainly used to highlight the tempo of fast pair dances. The bass is generally used together with the kontra everywhere in Transylvania, except for the Ciuc and Gheorgheni regions, where its place was taken over by the gardon a few decades ago. In conservative regions, like the Inner Transylvanian Plain, the bass is strung with two homemade gut strings, while the classically tuned four-string instrument is preferred by bassists who have adapted to the style of urban Romani bands. The same applies to the use of the bow: in the archaic regions, short and thick homemade bows are used, while the four-stringed double-bass are played with standard, factory-made bows.

The use of the percussion gardon is limited to the relatively small area of the Ciuc, Gheorgheni, and Ghimeş regions. The body of the smaller Ghimeş instrument is carved from a single piece of wood. The Ciuc and Gheorgheni instrument, nailed together from planks, is similar to the standard cello. The strings, all in one level, are beaten by the right hand with a stick, while the left hand pinches the outermost string and lets it loose to snap the fingerboard, producing an estam-like effect. In the Felcsík region, the left hand could also use a metal box filled with coins to beat the strings, instead of snapping one string to the fingerboard.

To turn to the membranophones, the flutes are probably among the earliest ever instruments of dance music. In Transylvania, the earliest information on the flute (Hun. *furulya*) originates from the 17th century. The Hungarians of Moldavia called it *sültü* (or *szültü*) which probably was the early Hungarian designation of the instrument. The *tilinkó* (or *tilinka*) is a simple tube, without finger holes; to produce sound, the player's lower lip is used to force the airstream against the tube edge. Also preserved in many regions of Transylvania, the flutes were far more popular among the Hungarians of Moldavia.

The bagpipe probably originated from Egypt. In Hungary, the first bagpipe representations appear in the age of King Matthias Corvinus; however, written data of the instrument's occurrence in Transylvanian rural setting among Romanians and Hungarians are only available from the 17th century. Its other names include *síp* (whistle) and *csimpolya* (rooted in: symphony). While certain beliefs connected to the bagpipe (and dancing) have survived in Moldavia, the bagpipe virtually disappeared from Transylvania; its memory is only preserved by the bagpipe-imitating music surviving on other instruments, mainly in Romanian folk music.

The *töröksíp* (Turkish pipe) has disappeared not only from Transylvanian, but from the entire Hungarian traditional culture, too. Székely people used to employ it for military recruitment, its synonym was *tárogató*. The modern *tárogató* appeared at the end of the 19th century and became popular in Transylvania, Bukovina, and

Ghimeş as an instrument of dance music, while some tárogató players were peasants or townspeople who played for their own delight.

The clarinet appeared in the Carpathian Basin with the Romani bands which began to form in the late 18th century. Its occurrence in Transylvania can be documented from the 1830s onwards.

The ancestor of the accordion (in Hungarian: harmonika), the manual aeoline, was constructed by the Berlin instrument maker Christian Buschmann in 1822. It oozed into Hungarian folk music at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, but it did not strike roots. Its modern form, the piano accordion, arrived in Hungary then in Transylvania after World War II, and it squeezed the kontra and the bass into the background, first in Romanian, later also in Hungarian folk music practice. A fiddle accompanied by an instrument of such great volume had to be reinforced by a saxophone, even in those regions where traditional ensembles of dance music had not included wind instruments earlier. In Transylvania, the accordion is rarely used to play the tune.

## 6. Types of musical accompaniment in dance music

The independent rhythmic accompaniment can be documented from the prehistoric to modern times, with archaeological, literary, iconographic and ethnographic data. A peculiar manner of rhythm production among Eastern European Roms is known as “oral bass” (szájbőgőzés). The only percussion instrument known in Hungarian folk music, the gardon, is not used on its own.

The second type, the merely melodic accompaniment, in its elementary form is represented, of course, by the singing. Some Hungarian dances imitating animals were accompanied by singing alone (e.g. the magpie dance), while some ritual wedding dances were danced to the singing of the wedding party without instrumental music (e.g. the candle dance to escort the bride to bed). The memory of dancing to singing is also preserved by some children’s folk games with dancing. The pergetés (lit. rolling, i.e. the performance of vocal tunes in a quasi-instrumental manner, through vocal improvisation with nonsense syllables) among the Roms also belongs to the category of vocal melodic accompaniment.

In the subchapter *Dance accompaniment with melody-playing instruments* Pávai begins with cases in which singing is coupled with a single instrument and carries on with the combined occurrence of several instruments. Dance accompaniment with wind instruments is frequent in Moldavia and Ghimeş, as well as in several parts of Transylvania, both among Hungarians and Romanians. As bowed instruments are younger than plucked strings or winds, data documenting their use in dance accompaniment do not go back to a remote past. Pávai exemplifies the *Dance*



*accompaniment with several melody-playing instruments* with data from the Hétfalu/Șapte sate region, the Upper Nyikó valley, and Cașinu Nou.

Complex accompaniment emerges when there is simultaneous melodic and rhythmic accompaniment to a dance. It may contain harmonic elements or even complete harmonies. In general, instrumental ensembles used for dance accompaniment often meet the requirements of complex accompaniment even without a percussion instrument; these ensembles have spread over a large area and have phased down the simpler solutions, like the vocal complex accompaniment, bagpipe, and zither.

Pávai lists the various combinations, including an instrument of complex accompaniment combined with a melody-playing instrument (e.g. fiddle and bagpipe, or wind instrument and bagpipe), several melody-playing instruments combined with an instrument of complex accompaniment (e.g. bowed or wind instruments accompanied by bagpipe; tárogató together with bagpipe, fiddle, flute, or Jew's harp), and melody-playing instrument combined with percussion (e.g. singing with rhythmic accompaniment and occasional combinations of melody-playing instruments and percussion). The duo of fiddle and gardon, used in the Csík Basin and the Valley of Gyimes, is an heir to the pipe-and-drum tradition; it is occasionally extended (fiddle–cimbalom–gardon, fiddle–kontra–gardon, or: two or more violins accompanied by gardon in Ghimeș). Ensembles including a plucked accompanying instrument (fiddle or flute with koboz) and folk music ensembles based on bowed string instruments also belong here.

The tradition of string ensembles is rooted in the 16–17th century “whole consorts” of Western Europe, i.e. instrumental ensembles of the same type, in this case, of the viol family. Here, Pávai gives a detailed survey of these traditional folk ensembles. These include: 1) fiddle–cimbalom–bass (the upper stretches of the river Kis-Küküllő, along the rivers Nyárád and Nyikó, in the Sóvidék region, and, occasionally, in Gyergyó); 2) fiddle–two-stringed kontra–bass (in the Gyergyó and Keresztúr regions); 3) fiddle–two-stringed kontra–cimbalom–bass (in Transylvania, it is even more sporadic than the previous one); 4) fiddle–three-stringed kontra–bass, where the fiddle and/or the kontra can be doubled (Kalotaszeg region, Transylvanian Plain, along the rivers Maros and Küküllő, and the Homoród valley) and a clarinet (Homoród valley) or a cimbalom may join the band (in the Upper Maros region); and, finally, 5) fiddle–three-stringed kontra–cimbalom–bass (mainly found in the Upper and Middle Maros region, where the cimbalom is indispensable for major dance events).

Traditional culture may have fixed certain constant ensembles for varying lengths of time; therefore, some instruments may have been commonly associated with certain regions or ethnicities. Actual local circumstances largely influence the

kind and number of instruments hired for dancing: whether there is a fairly large band nearby, whether there are resources to hire such a band, etc. István Pávai emphasizes that we must differentiate between a band of minimal composition still regarded as ideal by the villagers, and incomplete solutions forced on them by necessity (e.g. the clarinet–kontra duo only occurring in a mid-19th century document, or the flute accompaniment – in lack of a better solution, as witnessed by the informant.

## 7. Rhythmic accompaniment of dances

In this chapter Pávai follows in the footsteps of György Martin, the first scholar to examine the correlations between rhythmic accompaniment in Hungarian folk dance music and the rhythmic character of the pertaining dances. Pávai reveals the specificities of such correlations in Transylvanian folk music, relying on the research he has conducted in the past three decades. He calls the rhythm provided by the accompanying instruments kontra rhythm, adopting Martin's idea.

The importance of the kontra rhythm for dancing is confirmed by the field experience that dancers accustomed to the music of complete bands can dance to kontra accompaniment even if the melody-playing instrument is missing, but are reluctant to dance to merely melodic accompaniment. Deviation between the kontra rhythm and the basic rhythmic value of the dance suggests a makeshift application of music to dance, mostly due to a recent fashion.

The three main forms of kontra rhythm applied to the dances of the Carpathian Basin are slow *dúvő*, fast *dúvő*, and *estam*. The slow *dúvő* implies the kontra accompaniment progressing in four quarters per bar, and it has two variants: limping and steady slow *dúvő*.

The limping slow *dúvő* has an asymmetric pulsation, where every other beat is slightly lengthened. The four beats can have different proportions: 2-3-2-3 or 4-5-4-5. The Romanian slow couple dances in the Transylvanian Plain and along the river Mureș, known as *purtata*, *de-a-lungu*, or *împiedecata*, also feature an asymmetrical pulsation, but the four pulses are short-short-long-long, or short-long-long-long. A similar accompaniment can be found in the dance *lassú magyaros* of the Gyimes region. On the peripheries of the Transylvanian Plain, in the Maros–Küküllő region, in Székelyföld, and in Moldavia the dances corresponding to the limping slow *dúvő* have disappeared, but their music lives on in the genre of “reveling songs,” also known as “table song,” “dawn song,” and “soldiers’ farewell song.”

The steady slow *dúvő* accompanies the relatively recent dance types of *verbunk* and slow *csárdás*. Compared to the dances discussed above, these types are far wider known, almost everywhere in the Hungarian language area. The kontra most often plays four pulses of fourth value, two to a bow stroke, in each

bar. In most of the Maros–Küküllő region, and in the Upper Maros region, kontra players would take four eighths, instead of two fourths, to one stroke. The stress on the first and third note, reinforced by the bass, which always plays fourth values, shows that this technique is a variant of the slow *dűvő*. In the kontra practice of the Transylvanian Hegyalja region (around Aiud), a bow stroke takes only two eighths of quintuple subdivision, so the kontra actually plays fast *dűvő*. The bass, by contrast, stresses the four eighths, so the overall effect is similar to slow *dűvő*. In the gardon accompaniment of the slow *csárdás* in the Gyergyó, Csík, and Gyimes regions, the slow *dűvő* effect is blurred, as the two hands produce more of an *estam* effect. But if a kontra is added to the gardon, the slow *dűvő* character of the accompaniment is unambiguous.

In the case of fast *dűvő*, the kontra takes two eighths to a bow stroke. The fast *dűvő* is associated, first of all, with the men's dances of the slow and fast *legényes* types, and the couple dances of the *forгатós* ('turning') type. Versions of the slow *legényes*, known in the *Mezőség* region as *ritka magyar*, *ritka tempó*, or *ritka fogásolás*, are danced to fast *dűvő* in the relatively slow tempo. Much wider spread in Transylvania are the quicker variants of the fast *dűvő* accompanying the dances of the fast *legényes* type. For these dances, the bass also progresses in eighth notes in most regions; the only deviation from the kontra may be the separate bowing of each eighth. In the *pontozó* of the *Kutasföld* subregion, the second eighth-note is split, producing dactylic rhythm. In the Upper *Vízmellék*, kontra players keep the dactylic character constant, often shortening the second sixteenth. Couple dances of the *forгатós* type are also accompanied with fast *dűvő*. In the Upper Maros region, a special case of the fast *dűvő* can be encountered, attached to two kinds of couple dances: the first dance of the local dance cycle, known as *forduló*, *szapora*, or *sebes*, is accompanied with the fast *dűvő* without a staccato character; the *korcsos*, a dance of eighth pulsation in the middle of the cycle, is accompanied with a staccato fast *dűvő* in a slower tempo.

*Estam* designates the type of accompaniment in which the bass sounds the eighth notes on the beats, while the kontra sounds the off-beats. The slowest forms of *estam* can be found in the *Mezőség* region. In the Inner *Mezőség*, bands usually have two kontra players, one playing staccato fast *dűvő*, the other performing so-called "long *estam*," i.e. he ties his accentuated even-numbered eighths over to odd-numbered ones, creating a syncopation chain. This is the case of the "shaken up" *ritka csárdás* which thus becomes *sűrű csárdás*. In the latter both kontrás play long *estam*, which may become short at cadences, so the kontra may even sound the beat rather than the off-beat. In *Székelyföld*, the fast *csárdás* and the men's dances (*verbunk*, *csúrdöngölő*) may have *estam* accompaniment, but the latter may also take slow *dűvő*. In the Csík and Gyimes regions, the possibilities of the gardon call for *estam* in most dances.

From the perspective of dance, melodic rhythm has smaller significance than kontra rhythm. Considering aspects of dance music, the rhythm of the Hungarian dance tunes of Transylvania can be ranged in five large groups. (1) Motivic-repetitive rhythm can only be found in some archaic dance types, usually of the Balkanic dance stratum, mostly in Moldavia and Gyimes. Next to motivic repetition, periodic structure may also appear, and from the combination of two periods, strophic tunes may emerge. The basic unit of (2) goliardic rhythm is the four-bar line. In Hungarian folk music, the lines of goliardic rhythm usually combine to four-line tunes, the "swineherds' dances" being almost exclusively in this rhythm. In instrumental performance, tunes of goliardic rhythm may partly or wholly progress in sixteenth notes and can be found in most chain and round dances of Gyimes and Moldavia, the dances of the ugrós and legényes types, archaic couple dances, recent tunes of the fast csárdás, or urban social dances. Sameness of rhythm in all lines is not occasional, but belongs to the essence of (3) bagpipe rhythm. In this category, the tune frequently moves in even quarter notes, which appear in identically rigid form in each line. This is also true in the case of dotted patterns. (4) Syncopated rhythm proper stands for cases when the syncopation appears consistently at the same place of all four lines, or at least of both sections, of the tune. This type of melodic rhythm is frequent, besides folk tunes, among popular art songs, associated with the fast csárdás. In the 20th century, (5) dotted rhythm rose to preponderance in the Hungarian folk music of Transylvania, as the melodic rhythm of most dance tunes. Dotted rhythm is also characteristic of the "new style" Hungarian folksongs and to the urban csárdás tunes. In many cases, the dotted rhythm consistently fills (almost) the entire tune, however, in most cases, this rhythm is mixed with the progression in eighth notes. Dotted rhythm also has asymmetric variants in triple or quintuple proportion. A kontra rhythm of asymmetrical pulsation may be coupled with the fiddle and singing remaining in steady 4/4 time; however, the rhythm of the accompaniment and the dance motifs will also infect the melody.

The rhythmic phenomenon known by the Latin term *proportio* characterized Western European dance music of the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance. It denoted the relationship within a pair of dances, a slow one in quadruple time, and a faster one in triple time, whereby the tune of the first was retained in the second, with a rhythmic conversion. In Transylvania, Romanian, Hungarian, and Romani folk music preserves a stage when the members of a former pair of dances are independent; versions of the same tune type in duple, triple, or quadruple time may appear separately in different regions, dance types, or ethnicities. As another remnant of this tradition, the same tune is reinterpreted in metrical, rhythmic, and tempo frames for two consecutive dances, without a change to or from triple meter

(e.g. the links of slow cigánytánc and slow csárdás in the Inner Mezőség region, of forduló and korcsos in the Upper Maros region, and, more frequently, of reveling songs and slow csárdás, or of slow csárdás and fast csárdás). In regions with advanced instrumental tradition, an instrumental performance usually wraps the tune in rich figurations, and if a tune passes into the repertoire of a dance (or other genre) which customarily excludes singing, the degree of instrumental transformation increases; consequently, its relation to the original tune is more difficult to discern.

## **8. Melodic aspects of dance accompaniment**

Chapter eight begins with the discussion of the instrumental character of the dance tunes. Vocal melodies performed on an instrument are to be distinguished from the so-called absolutely instrumental dance music even if the latter is difficult to delineate, as it may preserve previously vocal melodies or because there are instrumental pieces to which lyrics have been applied afterwards.

Subchapter *The number and sequence of tunes connected to a dance* reveals on the one hand, that the number of tunes connected to a dance type in a region may be one, several, or many. In Hungarian dance culture, couple dances of both old and new style are danced to many tunes, while legényes men's dances, urban social dances, and a few chain dances of the Balkanic dance culture, to several tunes. However, most dances of the latter two groups are attached to a single tune each. On the other hand, sequences of several or many tunes within a dance process are regulated by factors of traditional culture. Some tunes are suitable to start a dance, while others always come later. Another factor of influence is the dancer just in front of the musician, whose favorite tune must be played.

Examining the correlations between dance and tune sections, Pávai observes that the legényes men's dances, each dance section with a distinct closure is of the same length as the tune sections. In Kalotaszeg, folk terminology calls them fordítás ('turn, change'), or pont ('point'). To dance tunes, musicians often attach further sections of eight or six bars, as interludes. Most of them may go with several, or nearly all, melodies of the same key. The types of interludes are relatively few, as they are grouped around some stereotypical chord progressions: in major keys, the alternation of V–I (Dominant–tonic interlude) is common, while in minor keys, the most frequent progression is VII–III repeated three times and then ended with V–i. In relatively rare cases, an interlude of peculiar rhythm may be permanently attached to a certain tune. The advanced instrumental interludes in the Hungarian, Romanian, and Romani folk music of Transylvania have frequently come about as emancipated closing sections of certain tunes. Those of major character clearly follow Western melodic ideas.

## 9. Aspects for the research of folk polyphony

This chapter presents Pávai's results so far in the study of folk harmony. He enumerates six points that otherwise fall outside the field of harmonic analysis in the narrow sense, but the phenomena modelled with their help facilitate the understanding of the polyphonic musical text.

The *musical authenticity* of a given material is confirmed "if upon replaying, an experienced and talented village musician, who acquired his instrumental knowledge in traditional ways, deems its harmonic solutions correct" (p. 322-323). The first factor influencing authenticity is the authenticity of the informant. Pávai met several kontra and bass players whose musical ear was insufficient to perform the harmonization deemed right by local professional musicians, yet regularly played in local dances and weddings, as they could still perform their primary task, to provide rhythmic accompaniment. Pávai has found that rural musicians generally feel the need for "right" harmonization. Unlike in European composed art music, in the archaic practice of folk harmony, the contributors to a harmonic impression are at least two, the kontra and the bassist, who never intend to produce full triads or tetrads by complementing each other's parts. It would therefore be mistaken to view the bass and kontra parts as one harmonic unit, like in classical harmony.

The *principles of harmonization* occurring in Transylvanian folk music, in addition to the drone accompaniment, were identified by István Pávai as melody-governed polyphony and functional harmonization. Drone accompaniment can be provided by several instruments capable of complex accompaniment (bagpipe, zither, hurdy-gurdy). In the case of other instruments (Jew's harp, flute blown with a guttural sound) the drone is created by the manner of playing. The widely used fiddle technique of sounding a neighboring open string beside the melody string also belongs here. The roots of melody-governed harmony must be sought in heterophony. However, heterophony in the relation of two melody-playing instruments must be differentiated from heterophony of a melody-playing instrument and an accompanying instrument. Melody-playing instruments mainly follow the melodic rhythm. In terms of harmony, the heterophony of a melody-playing and an accompanying instrument is more relevant, for the accompanist can partly or wholly deviate from the melodic rhythm, as he must ensure the adequate accompanying rhythm in the service of the dance function. Melody-governed harmony in ensembles of the fiddle–three-stringed kontra–bass type is brought about when the bass, playing the rhythmic scheme of the given dance, attempts to follow the skeletal notes of the tune, while the kontra plays a series of major chords whose roots correspond to the same skeletal notes. The result, a special form of heterophony, may be described as harmonization with major chord

mixtures. Interestingly enough, when a major triad is altered, the change is never for a minor chord, but usually for the implied dominant seventh chord. Among village musicians, variants of the functional harmonization, borrowed primarily from urban Romani style, have spread mainly in the Szilágyság and Kalotaszeg regions, and in some villages of the Kis-Szamos valley, the Upper Maros valley, and the Sajó valley. The essence of this method is that most chord progressions are in the authentic direction, and before any chord, its dominant chords is sounded. In this style of harmonization, each beat is usually assigned a new chord, or at least its variant with the seventh, whether justified or not by the melody. The resulting harmonies may appear as rather arbitrary, particularly in the harmonization of pentatonic or modal songs which have no leading notes. Pávai also gives examples for the mixing of the harmonic principles to varying degrees.

The examination of folk harmony must also take into consideration *the technical limitations of the instruments and the manner of playing*. Three-stringed basses are the most frequent; in some cases, the bass may have only two strings and only one, the tauter one, is actually used. In the case of a single active string, if a pitch required by the current principle of harmonization is beyond the lower limit of the instrument's tonal range, its transposition an octave higher will be used. Bassists, however, usually omit large interval leaps. Instead, they may keep the preceding note, or intone any other easily produced note at random, even if it does not fit the chord of the kontra.

Discussing the *nonverbal communication between primás and accompanists*, Pávai stresses that, according to the traditional norm, the fiddler in the role of primás is responsible for the repertoire; it is always him who determines the actual sequence of tunes from the stock of a dance. That explains why the primás always begins a tune alone, whereupon the others join in after a few beats or bars. They do not know or care how many times a tune is repeated, or when they will switch to the next one. When a new tune started, they either hold the previous chord in the bars of transition, or sound another one at random. Their primary role is to produce the rhythmic scheme of the dance. It is also frequent that fiddlers already prepare the opening note of the new melodic section with short passages at the end of the previous bar – these are also meant as hints for the accompanists, and if they get the message, they will play the “right” chord according to the local harmonic principle.

*Accompanying rhythm and tempo* jointly influence harmonization, both factors exerting their effect more strongly in the heterophonic harmonic style with chord mixtures. At a very slow pace, this way of harmonization may be realized perfectly, for the kontra bows each alternating metrical unit separately. For dances accompanied with two beats bowed at one stroke (dúvő), the possibilities of chord change are restricted. And the same applies to the estam-accompaniment of faster dances.

The style, character, or type of *a tune may also influence harmonization*. Tunes of different melodic structure may suggest different ways of harmonization, e.g. in instrumental tunes built on chordal figuration, kontra players usually identify the fiddle's broken chords, and intone the corresponding triads. Major tunes, strongly suggestive of tonality, are more likely to imply an accompaniment with functional harmonization. Pentatonic tunes, on the other hand, require melody-governed harmonization in bands who use that accompaniment style, even if mixed with functional harmonization.

It follows from the oral and improvised nature of folk music that at certain points of the musical process, the continuation cannot be anticipated. However, aleatoric improvisation, i.e. the choice from among several possible "right" solutions, must be differentiated from stochastic improvisation, which also implies accidental errors. This phenomenon is more emphatic in the field of folk harmony, where the control exerted by the community is weaker. The above explain why it makes no sense, for instance, to weigh the ratio of authentic and plagal chordal sequences in scores written down from sound recordings, for the nature of these connections may not be rooted in music, but in extra-musical causes. And this may be the reason why the harmonization of instrumental folk music seems more confusing at first hearing.

## **10. Conclusions of the research on the Hungarian folk dance music of Transylvania**

To conclude, I would like quote István Pávai's idea: "Several further aspects of Transylvanian folk dance music need thorough examination, but since at the current level of the processing of sources this has not been possible, they are not included in this volume. One of the most urgent tasks of the near future is the assessment and interpretation of the complete tune stock of Transylvanian folk dance music" (p. 371).

## **References**

Pávai, István. 2020. *Hungarian Folk Dance Music of Transylvania*. Budapest: Hungarian Heritage House – MMA Kiadó.